

Message Text

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SUBJECT: EVANS/NOVAK ON GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS

THE WASHINGTON POST JULY 9 CARRIES THE FOLLOWING EVANS/
NOVAK ARTICLE UNDER HEADING "NATO'S TRAGIC CONFRONTATION":

BEGIN QUOTE. A TURKISH GOVERNMENT VESSEL EQUIPPED WITH NEW
SEISMIC DEVICES FOR UNDERWATER OIL EXPLORATION IS ABOUT TO
LEAVE ITS BERTH NEAR ISTANBUL FOR "RESEARCH" IN NORTHERN
AEGEAN WATERS CLAIMED BY GREECE -- A DISASTER-PRONE VOYAGE
THAT DRAMATIZES THE TRAGIC DECLINE OF THE WESTERN ALLIANCE.

PASSAGE OF THIS SHIP, RECENTLY RECHRISTENED SISMIC, WILL
ADD ANOTHER BITTER CHAPTER IN THE HOSTILITY BETWEEN ATHENS
AND ANKARA ONCE THE UNIFIED CENTER OF NATO'S EASTERN
FLANK. FAR WORSE, PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES BEING TAKEN BY
BOTH SIDES AGAINST POSSIBLE GREEK INTERFERENCE WITH THE
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SHIP POINT TO A REAL THREAT OF SHOOTING INSIDE THE DIS-

PUTED WATERS.

THUS, THE SISMIC'S SCHEDULED SAILING -- DELAYED SEVERAL WEEKS PARTLY BECAUSE OF WASHINGTON'S ARDENT PERSUASION -- IS NOW TO COINCIDE WITH AEGEAN SEA NAVAL EXERCISES PLANNED BY BOTH GREECE AND TURKEY. THE AEGEAN SEA, WITH MASSED

GREEK ISLANDS STRETCHING CLOSE ALONGSIDE THE TURKISH COAST, WILL THEN BE A LETHAL COCKPIT.

THIS DANGEROUS CONFRONTATION POSES FURTHER RISKS TO THE DIMINISHED INTEGRITY OF WESTERN DEFENSES AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION, THE NEW POWER IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN. NEVERTHELESS, THE U.S. IS VIRTUALLY POWERLESS TO DO ANYTHING BUT COUNSEL DELAY IN THE SHIP'S SAILING. THE REMOTE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SISMIC COULD INDEED TRIGGER A SHOOTING WAR BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY FINDS WASHINGTON FULLY AS IMPOTENT AS IT HAS BEEN FOR 15 MONTHS OF LEBANON'S TRAGIC CIVIL WAR.

FURTHERMORE, AS WE HAVE REPORTED, U.S. POWERLESSNESS TO INFLUENCE EVENTS ANYWHERE IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN BASIN RAISES OTHER DIFFICULT QUESTIONS, SUCH AS HOME-PORTING FACILITIES FOR THE U.S. 6TH FLEET AND EVEN SHORE LEAVE STATIONS FOR AMERICAN SAILORS.

THE PENDING TURK-GREEK CONFRONTATION WOULD COME IN AEGEAN SEA WATERS CLAIMED BY BOTH COUNTRIES IN ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST BITTER DISPUTES OVER TERRITORIAL WATERS TODAY. GREECE, CLAIMING THAT ITS CLOSE-TO-TURKEY ISLANDS HAVE THEIR OWN CONTINENTAL SHELF, HAS THREATENED TO BLOW UP TURKISH SHIPS SEEKING UNDERWATER OIL THERE.

TURKEY, WHICH PERCEIVES THE FABLED GREEK ISLES AS "FLOATING" ISLANDS WITH NO CONTINENTAL SHELF OF THEIR OWN, CLAIMS THE DISPUTED WATERS LIE OVER THE TURKISH CONTINENTAL SHELF, TO WHICH TURKEY HAS SOVEREIGN RIGHTS.

BEHIND ANKARA'S DECISION TO CHALLENGE GREEK CLAIMS IN THE AEGEAN SEA LIES AN EVER-WORSENING DISPUTE WITH THE UNCLASSIFIED

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U.S. IT BEGAN WITH THE 1974 TURKISH INVASION OF CYPRUS IN REACTION TO THE ATTEMPTED TAKEOVER THERE BY THE THEN GREEK MILITARY DICTATORSHIP. EVER SINCE, THE FORD ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN PLEADING WITH THE DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS -- MOST RECEPTIVE TO THE GREEK LOBBY -- TO LIFT THE ARMS EMBARGO AND THUS END ONE-SIDED PUNISHMENT OF TURKEY.

THAT EFFORT NOW TURNS ON THE FATE IN CONGRESS OF THE

FOUR-YEAR, \$1 BILLION U.S.-TURKISH AID AGREEMENT SIGNED MARCH 26. THE AGREEMENT WOULD RESTORE U.S. RIGHTS TO INTELLIGENCE BASES, AIMED AT THE SOVIET UNION, THAT TURKEY CLOSED LAST JULY.

THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN INFORMED BY THE ADMINISTRATION THAT CONGRESS WILL APPROVE THE AGREEMENT THIS YEAR.

IN FACT, AS OF TODAY THERE IS NO CHANCE OF THAT.

DEMOCRATS WANT TO WAIT FOR A NEW DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION; REPUBLICANS PERCEIVE POLITICAL MISERY IN VOTING FOR TURKEY JUST BEFORE THE ELECTION.

THAT THE \$1 BILLION AGREEMENT NOW SEEMS DEAD FOR THIS YEAR IS EXTREMELY HARD FOR THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT TO SWALLOW. CONTRADICTING THE HONEYED TALK IN WASHINGTON WHEN THE AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED, THIS MEANS TURKEY'S ELIGIBILITY TO BUY U.S. ARMS IS LIMITED TO ONLY \$125 MILLION IN EACH OF THE NEXT TWO YEARS.

THE RESULTING SENSE OF BETRAYAL NOW BECOMING MANIFEST IS LIKELY TO MAKE TURKEY EVEN MORE ADVENTUROUS IN CONFRONTING GREECE OVER THE AEGEAN SEA. UNABLE TO SEE PROGRESS IN ITS BITTER STRUGGLE WITH WASHINGTON, ANKARA IS NOT HELD BACK BY U.S. ADMONITIONS.

WHEN THE GREEK GOVERNMENT PRIVATELY URGED THE U.S. AND NATO TO DISSUADE TURKEY FROM USING THE SISMIC IN DISPUTED WATERS, IT STATED FLATLY THE SHIP "WILL BE SUNK" IF IT SHOWS UP. U.S. PERSUASION DELAYED THE SISMIC'S DEPARTURE FOR TWO WEEKS, BUT IT IS NOW EXPECTED TO SAIL IN MID-JULY.

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SOME DIPLOMATS HERE BELIEVE THE SAILING WILL TRIGGER NOT TORPEDOES BUT ONLY A DANGEROUS GAME OF CHICKEN. REALISTS DISAGREE.

"THE HOTHEADS ON BOTH SIDES ARE SPOILING FOR A FIGHT," ONE DIPLOMAT TOLD US. "AND IF IT STARTS IN THE AEGEAN IT COULD SPREAD OVERNIGHT TO THE BORDER IN THRACE." THERE THE TWO NATO ALLIES FACE EACH OTHER WITH IMPOSING MILITARY POWER, AND THERE THE U.S. COULD NO MORE HALT HOSTILITIES THAN IT CAN END CIVIL WAR IN LEBANON. KISSINGER

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